REMARKS

The applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and the notice that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. Further, the applicants acknowledge and appreciate receiving a copy of form PTO-1449, on which the examiner has initialed all listed items.

Claims 1-7 are pending. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In numbered paragraph 1 of the office action, the specification was objected to for a typographical error in paragraph 54. This error has been corrected.

Minor changes have been made to claims 1, 2 and 6 to clarify the language and to change the organization of the claims.

Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by the patent to Gericke. The applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection for the following reasons.

The function of the major-diameter major through hole 51 is described in paragraph 0024 of the specification. As the level of liquid fuel rises to a top end of the major-diameter major through hole 51, the gas ventilation resistance increases, and the pressure in the fuel tank increases. As a result, the level of the liquid fuel in the housing 3 further rises to float a floating

valve 4, and an evaporator opening 63 is sealed. Thus, the pressure in the fuel tank rapidly rises, which causes a fuel supply gun to shut off automatically.

On the other hand, Gericke describes a rectangular opening 82 in addition to the triangular opening 83. However, Gericke merely says, in column 4, line 43, that "the vapors pass through the openings 82," and there is no description of the function of the triangular opening 83. As is apparent from Figure 2 of Gericke, a top end of the rectangular opening 82 is above a top end of the triangular opening 83. Furthermore, it appears that the opening area of the triangular opening 83 is larger than that of the rectangular opening 82. Therefore, even though the level of liquid fuel of the fuel tank rises to reach the top end of the triangular opening 83, gas in the fuel tank is emitted from the rectangular opening 82. Therefore, a fuel supply guns cannot be shut off automatically, and the rectangular opening 82 does not have the function of the major-diameter major through hole 51 of the present invention.

Gericke describes in Figure 4 that the top end of the rectangular opening 82 is located at almost the same position as the top end of a float 30 when the float 30 seals a vent opening 28. Therefore, even if the ventilation resistance of the gas increases as the level of the liquid fuel of the fuel tank approaches the top end of the rectangular opening 82 and the pressure in the fuel tank increases, the float 30 seals the vent opening 28 at that time. Therefore, the rectangular opening 82 does not have the function of and does not correspond to the major-diameter major through hole 51 of the present invention.

Gericke describes, in column 4, line 62 to column 5, line 29, that when the level of the liquid fuel, which has flowed into a cylindrical section 31, reaches a level above an opening 86,

the gas vapor in the cylindrical section 31 cannot pass through the opening 86. When the level of the liquid fuel outside the cylindrical section 31 rises further, the float 30 moves upward, due to the buoyancy of the trapped vapor and a spring 62, to seal the vent opening 28. As a result, a fuel supply gun is shut off automatically. Therefore, the triangular opening 83 of Gericke is quite different from the major-diameter major through hole 51 of the present invention, and the triangular opening 83 doesn't correspond to the major-diameter major through hole 51 of the present invention. Moreover, the present invention is different from Gericke in the mechanism for turning off fuel supply guns automatically. Gericke does not disclose or suggest the operation and effect of the major-diameter through hole 51 of the present invention. Therefore, claims 1-3, 5 and 6 are not anticipated by the patent to Gericke.

Claims 4 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Gericke in view of the published application of Mori et al. The applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection for the following reasons.

Claims 4 and 7 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. That is, the patent to Gericke fails to disclose or suggest the major-diameter major through hole as recited in claim 1.

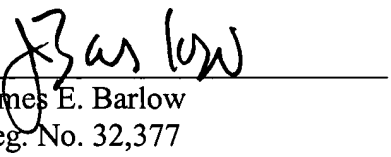
In addition, the published patent application of Mori et al. is not prior art. A translation of the priority document that corresponds to this application is attached. The translation is submitted to perfect the priority claim under section 119. Thus, the applicants assert the benefit of the priority of 5 July 2002, which is earlier than the filing date (27 November 2002) of the

Mori et al. application. Accordingly, the rejection based on the Mori et al. publication should be withdrawn.

In view of the forgoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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